

Abstract of the Disclosure

A heater in which, during the glow plug ramp time interval, the amount of energy supplied per unit of time to the glow plug/flame monitor can be successively changed, and a control unit which is operationally coupled to the glow plug/flame monitor. To enable continuous flame monitoring during the starting phase of the heater with the control unit, the resistance value of the glow plug/flame monitor is determined during the glow plug ramp time interval and compared to a threshold value R_{GS} , and when the threshold value R_{GS} is not reached, a flame-out signal is generated.